

Community Comments

Newsletter

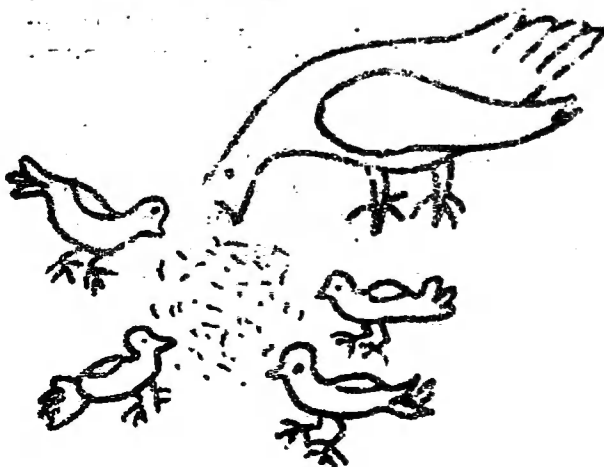
Community Service, Inc.
P. O. Box 243
Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387
February, 1973

This last year we have been deeply involved in helping with a New Town project near Dayton, Ohio. With understanding of the demoralization that is the result of large city living, it was clear that the New Town should not be just an extension of the nearby large city of Dayton. Sadly, some of the original planning in which we had part is being discarded for more conventional development.

Recently we have become concerned with the proposed annexation to Yellow Springs (population presently four and a half thousand) of a large housing development for a few thousand people. It had been tacitly assumed that Yellow Springs will follow the customary pattern of growth and finally merge into Dayton's growing sprawl. In seeking a way out, we have come up with the idea of "federation", whereby each smaller town can have its own government yet will be concerned and associated with the surrounding villages, but separated by open farm land.

Another source of concern to us in Yellow Springs has been with Antioch College. In enlarging it has lost a sense of community spirit among the students, faculty, and workers. In the current crisis, a strike that threatens to close the college, we have not only been observers but have been actively engaged in seeking resolution of the causes of the conflict.

Throughout all of these endeavors we have sought to keep our sights higher than superficial crises that preoccupy peoples' attention, trying to look to the achievement of whole community where there can be trust, fellowship, and mutual aid.



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with which we have come in contact.
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NEWS OF ARTHUR MORGAN. . .

Dr. Arthur Morgan with invaluable assistance from his secretary, Margot Ensign, has been hard at work on a book concerning his years with the Tennessee Valley Authority. Although he is nearly blind and has difficulty hearing, he has devoted much energy to the volume which is now almost complete. It promises to be interesting reading for those curious as to the formation and implementation of that immense project; a complex undertaking even by today's standards. We will keep you informed as to definitive plans for publishing the book.

Dr. Morgan corresponds regularly with numerous friends and acquaintances who are active in various areas of social concern and he wanted to share the following with our readers.

THE PRESERVATION OF OVERTON PARK by Arthur Morgan

In her senior year at Antioch Anona Spitler served as my secretary while I was a member of a national committee appointed to look into possible abuses of Yellowstone National Park. As a result of this, she became interested in public parks and has made somewhat of a specialty of it ever since. When there was a dispute in Dayton, Ohio, as to whether to preserve shade trees along the river banks, she concerned herself with that problem.

When she graduated from Antioch, Anona had a serious heart condition. The college physician estimated that she would probably live no more than four years, but she did not agree with him. She married a man named Fred Stoner and as Mrs. Stoner went with her husband to Memphis, Tennessee, and now, forty years later, she is working hard at her chosen field.

In the city of Memphis there is a strip of primeval forest running right through the town which constitutes an unusual park. A new highway was needed through or around Memphis and the highway authorities decided to cut it through this forest strip. Anona Stoner realized that this was a natural treasure and should not be ruined. She found a few people to cooperate with her and largely through her initiative, the case was carried all the way to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court decided that such destruction of natural areas should not be undertaken unless a careful study could show the necessity for it. This Supreme Court ruling applies, of course, to the nation as a whole and people in various parts of the country are finding a new degree of protection for beautiful park land.

Anona Stoner and her friends have continued their battle and in January, 1973, secured a final ruling by Secretary of Transportation, John A. Volpe. "Mr. Volpe ruled that he could not find, as the law required, that there were not prudent and feasible alternatives to the use of parklands for a highway nor that the broader environmental protection objections of the National Environmental Policy Act had been met. Apart from alternative locations, Mr. Volpe said he was convinced that a tunnel would be less harmful to the park than the present design." (New York Times, January 30, 1973)

Community in the Tennessee Valley

Recently we have been associated with the Cherokee Indians and have shared their concern about the projected flooding of their historic valley of origin by the planned Tellico Dam. Hawk Littlejohn returned to work with his fellow Cherokee people after a period of involvement with Community Service in Yellow Springs. Hawk has become a leading spokesman for his people for community values. Tellico Dam would flood a beautiful mountain river, much fine agricultural land, historic Cherokee town sites, and several hundred mounds in one of the richest regions of American Indian culture, including the home of the great Sequoyah. Widespread protest has come from environmentalists, Indians and others, and Arthur Morgan's public letter to the Chairman of the TVA about this project was given publicity in the papers.

For years the TVA has been excessively preoccupied with power production at the expense of people and communities, because it is a major market for strip-mined coal for production of electric power. It has thus been party to

Kentucky's disastrous strip-mining procedures whereby land-owners sold mineral rights to their land for a pittance, and the land was subsequently strip-mined into worthlessness.

We were heartened that the current chairman of the TVA, Aubrey Wagner, a man of social conscience, has had a growing sense of responsibility about these evils and concern for the people and communities involved. Therefore, we are dismayed to learn of a serious turn for the worse in the TVA; President Nixon has just appointed to the TVA Board of Directors a man committed to the strip-mine interests. The following newspaper clipping indicates its seriousness.

"In an ironical reversal of its old-time role as a regional and environmental blessing, TVA now encourages some of the nation's worst strip-mining--particularly in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama--to get cheap fuel.

At about the same time congressmen were shocked by a General Accounting Office study, showing the destructiveness of TVA's policies, President Nixon appointed Mr. William Jenkins to the (TVA) board (of directors).

As 'The New Republic' magazine recently noted, Mr. Jenkins has long been noted for his chumminess with strip-mine operations. As Tennessee's commissioner of conservation, Mr. Jenkins' major achievements included the gutting of strip-mine legislation and running a shamelessly lax enforcement department." (Dayton Daily News, January, 1973)

One of Arthur Morgan's many interests during his years with the TVA was that the natural beauty of that region be conserved. We encourage you to inform Mr. Jenkins of your feeling on this issue of strip-mining.

ARTICLE . . . LAND REFORM

When Community Service first included an essay on the land as trust (rather than as property) in the Intentional Community Handbook ten years ago, the presently emerging ideas of land reform in North America were just beginning. Now there is a new wave of talk and activity: Community land trusts, land use laws, and squatters' rights. Conventional practice of owning land and natural resources is being challenged. In Maine the Sam Ely Community Land Trust is an example. Local press there has given good coverage to their idea of having land owned by a non-profit corporation

and leased to community groups or individuals. On such a plot one would have formal rights of usership, yet not of ownership. The Community Land Trust: A Guide to a New Model for Land Tenure in America presents this plan well.

In the South the harmful impact of our land holding (earthlord) practices as they have displaced sharecroppers from old plantations, are of longer standing; here the reform projects are more ambitious. Koinonia Community's "Fund for Humanity" has been enabling black and white farming people to have homes of their own on land trust leaseholds. New Communities, Inc. in Georgia, owns 4,300 acres. A land trust project of the Foundation for Community Development plans to buy 1,500 acres in eastern North Carolina to be made available to area sharecroppers. NCI is still acting within a market system of tenure in that the land is deeded and can be sold for what purchasers will offer for it. Such land is not safe from return to earthlords.

In some areas as peoples' needs for land reaches desperation levels, there is talk of simply taking land for use. The spectre of a squatters' movement is rising. Others think of squatting as a possible form of civil disobedience or property resistance to confront the absentee landlord system. But disregard for legal processes can hurt the disadvantaged even more severely than the powerful. In Hiroshima after legal records were destroyed by the atomic bomb, the survivors of the bombing were commonly displaced by people who moved onto the land regardless of who had been on it before.

References:

The Community Land Trust: A Guide to a New Model for Land Tenure in America is published by the Center for Community Economic Development. The International Independence Institute, West Rd., Box 183, Ashby, Massachusetts 01431 wrote the book. Available from III or Community Service for \$3.50.

Maine Community Land Trust Planning Committee, P.O. Box 116, Brunswick, Maine 04011, publishes the Maine Land Advocate monthly newspaper and is planning a statewide land trust.

Clear Creek magazine December, 1973, has an article on "Land Ownership in America". Check it out.

Farm Workers in Rural America 1971-72 is the report of hearings before the Subcommittee on Migratory Labor of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare of the U.S. Senate. Of special interest may be the volumes Part Two: Who Owns the Land? and Parts Three A, B, C: Land Ownership, Use and Distribution (Part Three, hearings in California). The entire report is a goldmine of land reform thought and agrarian

agony with statements from Organic Gardening, New Republic (Peter Barnes), the National Coalition for Land Reform, etc. Order through the U.S. Government Printing Office.



LETTERS. . . MITRANIKETAN

Mitraniketan, an intentional educational community in India which started with the help of Community Service, has been struggling for self-sufficiency for fifteen years. Working against great odds, its progress has been both exciting and at times, difficult. We would like to share with you two excerpts of letters from friends about this community.

--From Bela Banerjee to Arthur Morgan, September, 1972
(Bela has been the nurse at Mitraniketan.)

"Every one of the children in Mitraniketan made pictures according to their imagination of a happy and healthy home they wish to live in. . . I remarked that the houses they have drawn are too good and costly for the poor villagers, but they answer that because of family planning, sanitary ways of living, also taking nutritious food, people are more happy and healthy so they can work and earn more money, so they can build better houses. The houses are not very good but the idea is there. Most of them drew only two children, a few of them drew three children in a house, vegetable garden, essential fruit trees available in the locality are also drawn, in every house you could see a poultry for egg, cow or goat for milk, compost pit for the house refuse to make manure for the vegetable garden and fruit trees. Also the drain for the waste water from the well and kitchen to the vegetable garden. As for the

drinking water, some of them drew closed wells, but some are drawn open, but they have made domestic way of purification, like mother boiling water for drinking, filtering or putting medicine in the well. Latrine they have made mostly attached to the bedroom or near the house. Usually if they have latrine, they always have very far away from their house, so it is very difficult to use by the person who is sick, old and the children, also in rain, dark of night for fear of snake, as a result they use porch at night."

--Judson Gray's letter of December, 1972, to Griscom Morgan:

"... I was at Friends World College as a sort of guest 'visiting' professor to help with the orientation of new students prior to their selecting their own projects, but your write-ups of Mitraniketan had made that one of my chief objectives in India. It turned out to be one of the better educational resources for FWC, and Viswan was attending an educational conference near Bangalore when I arrived. Organized largely by the FWC director, an Ilych fan, around educational "liberation", so badly needed in India. Only he and a Marxist writer had articulated any very imaginative ideas or shown much spirit or hope until Viswan's turn: 'Just do it! I quit wondering how, theorizing, waiting, and just got some kids and started talking with them under a tree.' So in that way he is probably one of the most practical men in all India in educational and rural revitalization.

I gather you have some reservations about Mitraniketan and I probably share the same ones. Still, its very existence in a country so short on suitable and creative models and on self-confidence--especially to do something other than to field a respectable cricket team or army--makes it a very vital and precious enterprise to nurture and keep alive. If Viswan can have more visible success to show potential followers or resources to attract able colleagues, he can make wonderful use of them, even if they split off from him to do things in their own way. . . . "

BOOK REVIEW. . . THE JOYFUL COMMUNITY

BY Benjamin Zablocki

You may have admired those sturdy wooden toys by Community Playthings without realizing they are made by a communistic Christian sect which manages to compete in our capitalistic system, sometimes too well. The three Bruderhof communities in New York, Pennsylvania and Connecticut have their roots in a band of young people of the German Youth Movement who were disillusioned by their society after World

War I and were inspired by the charismatic leadership of Eberhard Arnold. Espousing many values common to the present day commune movement, Arnold and his wife set out farming with a small number of followers. From those first happy and almost carefree years of brotherly love, the Bruderhof community weathered a merging with the rigid and strict Hutterian sect, a forced emigration from Nazi Germany to England and later Paraguay, and the death of its leader. Arnold had exhibited unusual foresight in preparing his community for his death. By 1956 over a thousand communitarians were living in six "hofs" in the United States, England, Germany, Uruguay and Paraguay; the Bruderhof could boast a diversity of economic, cultural and national backgrounds. Then a crisis in the early '60's purged the community of almost half its members and wiped out all but the three hofs in the U.S. The wounds healed and a more democratic but inward-looking community emerged.

In reading the Joyful Community, the reader feels as if he is a privileged observer of a bee hive colony aided by a lucid entomologist. Zablocki juxtaposes anthropological, sociological, and philosophical discussions in such a lively way that one retains a flavor of the Bruderhof life while gaining an interpretation of it. This is a rarity in books of this sort which often tend to be either academic and somewhat dull or entertaining but rather narrow in scope. Zablocki grapples with several overlapping topics which apply to the Bruderhof and other communities, and mankind at large. He notes that a true community must have an underlying "myth" (world-view) accepted by its members and that it differs from a "communion" (an example being a hippie commune) in that the former would say "I love you because you are my brother" while the latter would say "You are my brother because I love you". Communities are based, then, on a common belief and interdependence, rather than on emotion. In exploring individualism versus collectivism, Zablocki relates how a Bruderhof novice must reject his ego and accept dependency on the Brotherhood. In so doing the person experiences a new joy and release of energy. Zablocki points out that the Bruderhof has had its tragedies and certainly has its limitations, particularly when applied as a model for society as a whole.

The Joyful Community is enlightening reading for Western man, who in freeing himself from the restrictions of tribalism has found himself rather lost and alone. Zablocki's book was published by Penguin Books in 1971 and can be obtained through Community Service in paperback for \$1.95.



IDEAS AND GROUPS. . .

Community Service has had close association with the Ohio Center which is an independent education-action organization providing fellowship, support, assistance and resources to people organizing local and statewide community action movements. Its office is located in Columbus, Ohio.

For the past three years it has engaged in pilot projects and training programs that vitalize and enrich endeavors in community development. The focus of the Ohio Center is with the following groups: minorities, the student youth culture, clergy and church laymen, social welfare advocates, and smaller communities including the Appalachian counties in the southeastern portion of Ohio.

Operating on a shoestring budget, the Ohio Center endeavors to prove that bottom-up fellowship and dynamic social and political change can occur without dependence on bureaucratic support from state or federal agencies. The Center conducts training workshops for community workers, leaders, and students. The subject matter is group and community work, social planning, and community economy. These workshops are available on the basis of need, though the Center does have minimal expenses to meet. It also possesses tax-exempt foundation status with the Internal Revenue Service.

Members of its board include: Walter Cares of the Columbus Black Brothers Coalition, Griscom Morgan of Community Service, Arvis Avaretti of Kent State, Gail Long of Cleveland, and George Hayduk of Sandusky. The director is David Johnsen (also a trustee of Community Service).

The International Arbitrage Institute has issued a new currency called "constant" as a feature of a "demurrage" or taxed currency. Lacking the demurrage feature, we do not see this experiment as a significant solution to our economic problem, because, by 'Gresham's' economic law, a hoardable constant goes out of circulation and is used as a security rather than a medium of exchange, leaving inflating or, if developed, "demurrage" currencies to be used for trading. However, we feel that such a project should be followed closely for what we can learn. For more information write to IAI, Exeter, New Hampshire. After reading their material, we urge you to read The Simplicity of Economic Reality issue of Community Comments.

Conference Tripping

This last fall and winter was notable for the out-of-season conferences held. Usually conferences of an alternatives' flavor have been held in warmer weather, but this past November 300 people gathered in Madison, Wisconsin, for a

conference on "Building Cooperative Community". In January 150 people got together in Omaha, Nebraska, for a conference "Toward a Better Human Future". One hitch hiking Conference goer commented, "Just wear a couple layers of wool long johns. . . like the winter I spent in a Colorado cave."

At both conferences great care was put into arrangements for natural foods and good sleeping space. In this sense the organizers used the conference medium as the message--alternatives. Sipping herbal tea and sleeping on the floor of a coop house. . . .

Temperature, board and room aside, the two conferences were in contrast. The Madison conference was attended largely by 20-30 year olds. They were active in various projects and keen on telling others the way to proceed. Emphasis in discussion was on economics. Loud talkers dominated the workshops, each jumping in as another paused. Discussion often broke down into ideological debate. In comparison Omaha seemed quite warm and peaceful. The conferees tended more towards white hair and had an air of seeking about them. People did a lot of listening to each other.

So what? People with similar motives are moving in different directions. The age-old polarity, active and reflective, is still with us and to create much of anything new we have to be about weaving the two together.

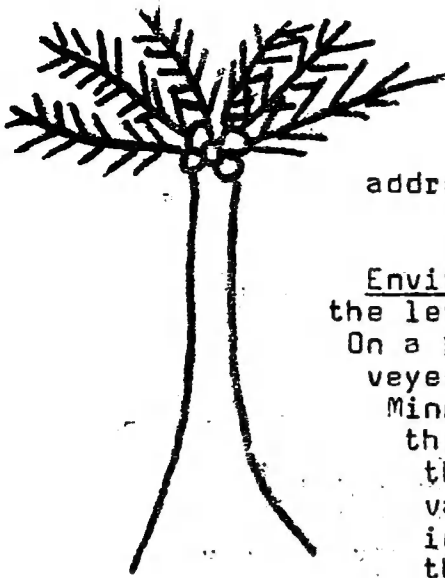
The Alternative Society is a new organization in England aiming to bring together Social Experimenters, young people and diverse fragments of Alternative Society into a community of pioneers; endeavor toward a better society. Their list of patrons includes such notables as economist Fritz Schumacher and historian Arnold Toynbee. The organization's chairman, Stan Windass, just visited us on his U.S. trip, before spring programs back in England. Their address is 9 Morton Avenue, Kidlington, Oxford.

New Schools Exchange has moved from Santa Barbara, California, to a farm 28 miles north of us here in Ohio. The new editor, Bill Harwood, will continue to work with the Center for Experiential Education at Antioch College. The new address for NSA is St. Paris, Ohio.

The portable videotape recorder can help to bring new hope to struggling or divided communities. Pioneer "social animators" are already using it to revive community spirit and self-awareness in places as varied as crowded urban slums or rural communities dependent on dying industries.

These conclusions emerge clearly from a new report, Video in Community Development. The report is published at \$9.95 for the Centre for Advanced Television Studies in London By Ovum, Ltd., 22 Grays Inn Rd., London, WC1 England.

Community Trades and Services Guild needs help in compiling a comprehensive register of Alternative Trades and Services. Send them addresses of alternative businesses, craft workers, shops,



coops, and supporting organizations. Their address is P.O. Box 4302, Stockton, California 95204.

Environment, November, 1972, has a fine article on the level of energy use by communes in Minneapolis. On a per-house hold member basis, the 12 communes surveyed used 40% less natural gas than the average Minneapolis household; 82% less electric power than the average Minneapolis household; 36% less than the national average of gasoline in cars. The value, new, of household appliances was 60% lower in communes. This nine page report is quite thorough. Read it for the questions it raises about the cultural bases of our energy crisis.

Alternative Schools in Ohio

Community Service is involved with groups in various areas of social change. OCEAN, the Ohio alternative schools coalition, is establishing a resource center and communications network for Ohioans concerned with alternative education and education reform without and within the system. Some of us attended their recent meeting in Dayton and had the joy of sharing a day with folks from various independent Ohio schools. An example of such a school is the New School in Cincinnati, 3 Burton Woods Lane. Their school building is an old three story stone mansion in Cincinnati proper. Forty children participate in the New School's elementary program and forty in a pre-school morning Montessori program. Some children take part in an extended day program when their families can't take them home until six in the evening. Parents and staff share in the Committee of the Whole (COW) which oversees the school. Technically, the students (pre-school and elementary) are COW members, too, but they take little part. About twenty staff and volunteers share in the teaching responsibilities.

New Morning, another Cincinnati alternative school, is negotiating with the city public schools to join the public system which would enable it to receive the \$900 per student that the city schools normally spend on a child's education for a year. This is a possibility for the New School, also.

The Appalachian region now offers a number of periodicals:

- Appalachian Journal, Appalachian State Univ., Box 536, Boone, North Carolina 28607; biannual, 4 issues/\$8
- Appalachian Heritage, Alice Lloyd College, Box 132, Pippa Passes, Ky. 41844; quarterly/\$5 per year
- Appalachian Notes, Erasmus Press, 225 Culpepper, Lexington, Kentucky 40502
- Mountain Life and Work, Council of Southern Mts., Inc., Old Bank Bldg., Main St., Clintwood, Va.

A Landscape For Humans, by Peter Van Dresser, calls for a systematic modification of a wide spectrum of government and business policies to facilitate the development of ecologically adapted regional communities. This excellent book is available through Community Service for \$3.00.

The annual meeting of the Homer Morris Loan Fund (for Intentional Communities) will be on March 18th at Tanguy Homesteads. Saturday March 17th the Fellowship of Intentional Communities meets preceeding the Loan Fund meeting. People in intentional communities are invited--in limited numbers. (Ourotwenty-first-year now!) For arrangements contact Reuben Close, Box 174, Glen Mills, Pennsylvania 19342.

LETTER FROM THE COMMUNITY SERVICE STAFF

Dear Friends,

We would like to invite participation from you in our newsletters. We feel that many of you have something to say about community or community concerns. Many of you are also intimately involved in community-related work and study or know of what others are doing.

To make this possible we are changing the format of Community Comments and our Newsletters. Instead of four Community Comments each year, we will be sending two CC in booklet form and four CC in newsletter form to all members of Community Service and subscribers. These Newsletters will embody some of the characteristics of the Community Comments and also participation from others who are interested and concerned.

We hope that in this way information, concerns and work can be shared with the network of interested people all over the world who receive Community Service publications. Please write us letters, send us books to review, articles and information. We will need your input, criticism and support.

Our annual membership fee, which includes a subscription, has been changed to \$10.00 due to increased costs. Being a member is a way of supporting the work that we do. If you want to receive just Community Comments and Newsletter, a subscription is \$3.50 per year. Others who have been on our mailing list will no longer regularly receive the Newsletter but only occasional mailings. Thanks for your continued interest and support.

The peace be with you,

Community Service Staff